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C O N F I D E N T I A L HILLAH 000106

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [KISL](#) [SCUL](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#)  
SUBJECT: SADRIST UNIVERSITY OPENS IN HILLAH

REF: HILLAH 101

CLASSIFIED BY: Eleftherios E. Netos, Political/Economic Officer,  
PRT Babil, REO Al-Hillah, U.S. Department of State.  
REASON: 1.4 (d)

11. (U) This is a PRT Babil Cable.

12. (U) In yet another sign of their burgeoning strength in Babil, the local branch of the Office of the Martyr Sadr (OMS) recently opened the "Sadr Religious University" in Hillah. The institution advertises itself as a religious center for higher learning offering three "levels" of instruction (NFI). Tuition is free. It is open to both genders and appears to seek recent secondary school graduates who have yet to enroll in university (post has no information on enrollment). Local staff report that banners advertising the "university" appeared immediately prior to the end of the school year and were displayed prominently in front of the Babil office of the Department of Education, and near a secondary school. Based in the Al-Askan neighborhood, a Sadrist stronghold near the Al-Hillah Teaching Hospital, the institutions's grounds thus far appear to consist of only a single building which may have been a house.

13. (C) Comment: The opening of the Sadr Religious University is yet another sign of the continued growth of the Sadrist presence in Babil, which is fueled largely by the citizenry's widespread discontent with the ISCI-dominated provincial government. At the same time, the sight of the banners displayed directly in front of the Babil office of the Department of Education betrays the provincial leadership's efforts to appease the Sadr Current (reftel). The creation of this "university" is another sign of how the Sadrist provision of "services" to the general public is creating a base of support which OMS hopes to mobilize in time for provincial elections. End Comment.

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